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19 May 1954

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MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Critique of Defensive Pharmacology Course

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1. There is no doubt in my mind but that the course in general showed very careful and unusually detailed planning. [REDACTED] showed himself to be a very good teacher with a fine grasp of his topic. Consequently, in the frame of reference which the course was prepared, I can only say that the organization was excellent. The content was satisfactory and interesting as far as I personally was concerned. A possible criticism that I could make is that the material tended to be either too simple or too technical. In other words, whenever [REDACTED] was in his element, the field of pharmacology, he was stimulated by his knowledge of the subject and occasionally would take for granted that all of his audience had the background to understand what he was talking about. When he was out of his element, that is, in the area of sociological and psychological factors of drugs and drug addiction, he underestimated the sophistication of his audience. As a result I felt that he could have spent more time laying the background for his pharmacological discussions and less time on the other aspects.

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2. The material which was circulated about the course emphasized that it was to be a defensive pharmacological course. The frame of reference which I entered with, was that there would be much more time spent on methods to achieve this purpose. In fact, the course would be better labelled as a Survey Course on Drugs, and had that been its purpose, I would not be called upon in any way, shape or form to criticize it because I thought it was excellent. The major criticism, then, that I have to offer is that perhaps this type of course could be given generally as a prerequisite for more detailed courses in either defensive or offensive pharmacology.

3. The study materials were essentially satisfactory from my point of view, but I do not think they went far enough. The lecture summaries were well prepared but at times I felt that [REDACTED] was tied down to them too much. For example, he was in the position of having announced what he was going to say and, therefore, he had to cover everything in order to live up to his advance billing. This made it somewhat difficult to gain the spontaneity which might have been achieved during the lecture periods. A great deal of information which he felt it necessary to cover could have been covered by more detailed appendixes and references to the

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literature. The amount of time available for such a course makes it possible for the attention of a great deal of time in study and reading, thereby relieving the instructors to develop and explain material resulting from the needs of the group. Not being familiar with the literature available, I do not know to what extent detailed accounts of the experience of people under the influence of drugs is available. This is the area in which I personally would like to have seen better material. Those of us who have had considerable experience in talking with drug addicts have a pretty good reservoir of information about drug effects. Most people have not had this opportunity and it would be well worthwhile, I believe, to get some detailed accounts in this area. In general, the library, for such a course, needs to be greatly expanded with a variety of books available ranging from fairly simple text to more technical publications. I have never been one who got too much out of the average training movie so I am not going to evaluate this. I certainly did not get anything out of the one movie which was shown, and would like to have seen some of the more technical movies in this area; but the extent that this would be useful to a less knowledgeable group, I have no way of evaluating.

4. As was expected, the demonstrations were by far the most effective aspects of the course. I found them extremely revealing experiences, and out of them came material which made a lot of the written material available much more meaningful. For example, I had read the personal accounts of experience with microtine before I took the drug, with little effect. After having taken the drug the accounts were extremely meaningful. Since the demonstrations involved such a singular individual experience, I think much more would have been accomplished had there been more time available for discussion of the individual experience with members of the staff and with the group as a whole. It is my opinion that it would have been better to have tried to work out a schedule which would have allowed for private administration of drugs with a subsequent critique, and then the administration of the drugs in a social group, with a critique. The psychological testing was not adequate for the purpose. It added very little and took an undue amount of time as conducted. I certainly don't believe that the tests should be given to one another in the manner in which they were done. Psychological testing including pre-testing strikes me as being important only if the course is going to be for defensive purposes. It would not be necessary for the kind of course conducted unless the individual drugging, as mentioned above, could be carried out, and then only to more adequately demonstrate the effects.

5. The supervision and security of the course was as good as could be expected under the circumstances. Inasmuch as the prospectus on the course had been given a fairly wide dissemination, there probably were a good many people who knew or suspected what was going on. A true course in defensive pharmacology certainly, in my opinion, should not be given without any difficulty.

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6. I felt that the evening seminars were the most productive aspects of the course and I would like to have seen more of this particular type of approach used during the day. The kind of tests administered were the kinds of test which, I think, should be used. The particular ones used were probably too short for the purposes. Some 15 or 20 items such as were included could have been used with better effect.

7. I think I can summarize my attitudes somewhat as follows:

a. I don't think this was a course in defensive pharmacology as advertised. However, I do feel that this course or something like it should be a definite prerequisite for any projected course in either defensive or offensive pharmacology.

b. The course was well organized and well presented, but I do not believe that the library facilities were adequate nor that the written materials were complete enough.

c. I personally would have preferred that some of the lectures would have been less didactic allowing for more spontaneous discussion and freedom of range.

d. It is apparent that the operational significance of drugs has not been clearly enough described to allow the people planning the course to develop material in this area which would be helpful and useful for the purposes involved.

e. The experience with the drugs was extremely meaningful and modifications of this technique should by all means be included in any future such course. At the same time the possible deleterious psychological effects of the administration of microtine must not be minimized. Without further planning in this area it is possible that more harm than good could be accomplished by drugging but I would strongly recommend against abandoning the idea until further study in this area can be undertaken.

f. I strongly recommend against using the words defensive or offensive for the present course. I do recommend that consideration be given to running a similar course benefitting from this experience for high-level operational people, both the staff and division levels, with the aim of developing the possibility of ultimately setting up advanced training in both the defensive and offensive aspects of drugging.

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cc: D/TR  
A/AE/TR

Chief, Assessment Branch  
Assessment and Evaluation Staff

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